

ACCOMMODATION IN BARBADOS

Art Studios | Apartment 14 | Discovery Bay | St James Barbados

Things to do

Tours of the island

Williams Tours (427 1043) pick up from The Discovery Bay Hotel. At the time of writing, it cost \$125 BDS per person and the tour includes a visit to the Animal Flower cave, Cherry Tree hill, Bathsheba (stopping for lunch), St John's Church and Sunbury Plantation house.

For something a little more personal, Amigo Taxi Service specialises in door-to-door service and will organise a day tour of the island with your own specifications. They charge \$300BDS per taxi, so up to 4 people could take the trip (233 0139 – cell, 432 1030 – work).

If you don't fancy a tour, then here are some suggestions for trips we have done by bus. It may take a little longer, but it's cheaper and much more of an adventure.

Bathsheba (East Coast)

The bus to Bathsheba leaves from the Speightstown bus terminal at 10am and runs every two hours. It takes about an hour to get to Bathsheba, but the scenery across the island is worth the bumpy bus ride. It takes you past banana plantations and sugar beet fields and of course local houses and villages. When you arrive in Bathsheba, you will be facing the rugged Atlantic coast and not much else. It's pretty deserted and there is not much to do but admire the scenery. It is beautiful, but too dangerous for swimming. A walk along the beach is a must; perhaps bring a picnic and sit on the quiet, secluded beach. Alternatively walk up the hill to the Round House restaurant for lunch. It's a lovely spot with great views and food is reasonably priced. The buses back to Speightstown only come every two hours; you can easily do a walk and have lunch in that time, but don't get distracted and miss the bus back.

Crane Beach Hotel

This is a bit of a trek by bus, a car would be much easier, but less of an adventure. Get the bus to Bridgetown and walk across town to the Fairchild Street bus terminal to pick up the Sam Lord's Castle bus. It's probably a 45 minute bus journey. Ask the driver to let you off at Crane Beach Hotel; you have to ask as you would never guess from the road that you were about to see one of the most exclusive hotels on the island. We couldn't believe it when we arrived. It looked like a building site, but we were determined and plodded down the road toward the hotel reception. We were greeted at the reception by a number of security guards, so we asked to see the views, and also asked about lunch. We were escorted to the restaurant via the pool, which had a number of bronzed looking people walking by it. We were taken aback by the views from the restaurant, which is located on the top of the cliff overlooking a rugged Atlantic ocean, with glorious white sandy beaches below. We enjoyed a very reasonably priced lunch and then walked down the stairs to the beach. There is beach access further up the road, but it is an easier walk through the hotel.

Sandy Lane Hotel

This hotel is set on the island's most famous golf course – Tiger Wood married at this hotel. It's very exclusive, but we managed to sneak in for a drink at the pool bar. It's actually a lovely walk from the apartment, walking left along the beach. Probably takes about an hour to walk, stopping for a dip in the sea to cool off on the way, but if you don't want to walk, you can travel by bus to the entrance, which is on the main road from Holetown to Bridgetown. As the beaches in Barbados are all public, you are well within your rights to use the beach in front of the hotel, but we thought we would take a look around . . . we made it to the pool before getting spotted, so we asked nicely if we could sit and have a drink. They were very happy to do this, but did make sure we left without venturing further into the hotel. We have heard of other 'visitors' that managed to take a swim in the pool – good luck!

ACCOMMODATION IN BARBADOS

Art Studios | Apartment 14 | Discovery Bay | St James Barbados

Port St Charles

This resort is north of Speightstown. It's a very pleasant walk along the coast, if you follow the road north from the beach front at Speightstown. There are some very quiet beaches on the way up, before you reach a busy resort. If you keep on walking, you will eventually end up at a dead end, which overlooks Port St Charles, but with no public access through the private apartments.

Port St Charles has a marina with some very lavish yachts. There is access from the main road through security, but apart from an expensive restaurant, and possibly a coffee shop opening in the future, there is just a complex of luxury apartments. If you don't fancy the walk back to Speightstown, you can take a bus from opposite the resort to take you all the way back to Holetown

Other places of interest around the island

Flower Forest

This 50-acre forest was described as follows by an Italian visitor from Milan: "If I owned paradise and Flower Forest, I would rent paradise and live at Flower Forest." You can stroll between a profusion of tropical blossoms arranged as a cross between a botanical garden and a nature trail. Use the seats placed throughout the forest and revel in the wonderful views available.

Harrison's Cave

Developed as a tourist attraction by the Barbadian Government, Harrison's Cave is a magnificent natural phenomenon – a series of beautiful underground coral limestone caverns, complete with stalactites and stalagmites, underground streams and waterfalls. Visitors are taken through the caves on an electric tram with an official guide.

St. Ann's Fort and the Garrison Savannah

The first British soldiers were stationed here about 1695. The fort was completed in 1703 and named in honour of the Queen. The building with the clock tower was once the guard house of the Garrison. It was built in 1803 and damaged by the hurricane of 1831, but the clock tower remained intact. The fifty acres of open space was the parade ground of the troops and, since the withdrawal of the troops in 1906, the Savannah has been used for recreation, sports and ceremonial functions. The Barbados turf club holds several horse race meetings here every year.

Hackleton's Cliff

Rising almost sheer within a few miles of the coastline to a height of one thousand feet above sea level, Hackleton's cliff affords some of the most breathtaking views of the island's east coast.

Morgan Lewis Sugar Mill

The largest and only complete sugar windmill surviving in the Caribbean, the wind-driven machinery ground sugar cane in the 18th and 19th centuries. From the top of the hill, you can enjoy magnificent views of the Atlantic Ocean and the lovely Scotland district.

Sporting activities

Diving

Hightide Watersports is based at the Coral Reef Club and offers a good selection of diving activities and courses (432 0931). Barbados is formed from coral and offers some spectacular dives. There are a few wrecks that can be explored, one of which is the Stavronikita, which is located in the Folkestone Marine Park. The ship rests in 120ft of water less than half a mile from the shore.

Snorkelling

The beach at Discovery Bay has a great reef to snorkel in. It is an easy swim out to the raft and you can get to see plenty of colourful fish on your way out to it.

ACCOMMODATION IN BARBADOS

Art Studios | Apartment 14 | Discovery Bay | St James Barbados

Sailing trips

You can take a catamaran cruise on Stiletto, which does not hold too many people; the cruise includes swimming with the giant turtles; it is the perfect introduction to Barbados and a good way of seeing the coastline. It leaves from Discovery Bay Hotel beach (231 3829).

Other Water Sports

There are many opportunities for jet skiing, waterskiing, sailing, glass bottom boats and banana boats all at Discovery Bay Beach, and up the road at Mullins Beach. Prices are similar, but it is always worth trying to get deal.

Cricket

During the season, Maple cricket club play at Trent's field directly across the road from the apartment. Matches are either three day (two innings each), or one day limited over. The three day matches start on the Saturday and finish the following Saturday / Sunday; with the one day game played on the first Saturday.

Golf

We have never played golf on the island and so have no experience of how available they are to the General Public. Barbados now has four excellent 18-hole championship golf courses; there are also two 9-hole courses:

- » Sandy Lane Golf Club – 1 mile South of Holetown: www.sandylane.com/golf
Now boasts 3 courses. Two brand new courses have been completed. These Tom Fazio designed courses make Sandy Lane one of the finest and most exclusive golf resorts in the world
- » Royal Westmoreland – 2 miles North of Holetown: www.royal-westmoreland.net
18-hole championship course by Robert Trent Jones Jr. Placed high up on a former sugar plantation, with a magnificent view of the Caribbean Sea.
- » Heywoods Golf Course – adjacent to Almond Beach Hotel, near Speightstown.
A small executive course, 9 Holes (Tel: 422-4900); more for relaxation than a challenge for dedicated golfers
- » Barbados Golf Club – near Oistins in the south
18 Holes - 6,805 yard par 72 Championship golf course, open to the public. The work of Ron Kirby, one of the world's top golf course designers.
- » Rockley Golf Course – South Coast
A pleasant 9-hole course situated in a Villa resort area.

More Golf details can be found on the web at: www.barbados.org/golf.htm

Spa / massage

If all the above activities sound a bit energetic for you, how about treating yourself to a relaxing spa or massage. There is a spa at Suga Suga opposite Mullins beach, which offers lots of pampering treats. A 30 minute back, neck and shoulder massage will cost about \$95 BDS.

We have a visitor book in the apartment; please feel free to write in it. It is always nice to hear about other people's holiday stories.

Have a great holiday,

Lisa and Steve

For more information contact info@accommodationinbarbados.com